

# LEADING THE WAY FORWARD



■ **CASSANDRA MOTT**  
Blank Rome

**C**assandra Mott represents commercial banks and non-bank lenders, as well as private and public company borrowers and private equity portfolio companies, in a variety of commercial finance transactions, with a particular focus on leveraged buyout financings related to acquisitions and recapitalizations. According to *Chambers USA*, she is an “exceptional practitioner with great business sense.”

Cassandra has structured, negotiated, and documented senior, subordinated, mezzanine, and unitranche financing facilities of many types, including single, “club”, syndicated, general working capital, investment-grade credit, asset-based, cash flow, first lien and second lien, and multijurisdictional facilities. She also advises clients on intercreditor matters, helping them structure and negotiate transactions with multiple debt tranches and lien priorities. Her practice also includes advising clients on in-court and out-of-court debt restructurings.

She has worked on many transactions both domestically and internationally across a vast range of industries, such as oil and gas, chemicals, consumer products, healthcare, technology, retail, transportation, and manufacturing. Cassandra is a frequent author and speaker on a variety of industry and diversity, equity and inclusion matters.

## What role has mentoring played in your career?

I have had a number of really great mentors throughout my career, both men and women, so it's important to me to give back to the younger generation of professionals. I'm dedicated to being a role model for young lawyers and advocating for and supporting increased gender diversity in the profession. I make every effort to provide younger and female lawyers with a variety of work and client exposure and encourage them to make time for not only professional endeavors, but personal ones. As a member of an underrepresented group, when you become more senior and in a leadership role, there is a realization of the level of responsibility that women and other diverse lawyers bear. Your role as a leader provides representation, and with that comes the responsibility to represent the diverse perspectives that may not otherwise be accounted for. As a female leader, I have a voice and a responsibility to women and other diverse members of the firm, and I promote firm programs to enhance gender diversity. I want to show them that there is a way to partnership, to equity partnership, and to firm leadership. Further, outside the firm, I have made a conscious effort to mentor female clients, which hasn't gone unnoticed by clients. More than once I've been asked by clients to take a young female banker “under my wings” so to speak, and I find that very rewarding. It's an honor for clients to entrust me with their very own people.

## Any secrets to balancing your work/personal time?

The term “work-life balance” is a misnomer. I would drive myself crazy trying to balance both professional and personal demands. Instead, what I try to do is be present in the moment. If I'm at the office, or with a client, I do my best to focus on professional matters. If I'm at a lacrosse game for my son, I do my best to focus on that

experience. Now, don't get me wrong, I often fail miserably at this endeavor, but it's a lofty goal I'm still working to achieve.

## How can commercial finance organizations attract and retain more women?

These organizations should engage in a strategic, concerted effort to attract and retain women. They should educate their membership on the business case for diversity because nothing grabs people's attention more than a solid economic argument. Further, they should offer promising female members and prospective members meaningful committee or other leadership roles, outside of just a women's forum committee, to engage these women. As an example, I recently joined SFNet's Houston leadership ranks by taking on the Programming Committee Chair position. Although I was initially offered a role on the Women's Committee, I declined in lieu of the Programming role but I promised to fully support, and engage with, the Women's Committee in its crucial work for the Chapter.

## What do you think work will look like in the next few years?

I hope to continue partnering with clients to achieve good outcomes despite any obstacles that present themselves, whether that's a pandemic, a downturn in business or a catastrophic event that affects a company's business. I also enjoy helping my clients build their businesses, whether through introductions to my contacts or other clients or value-added legal work. The best client relationships I have are those where the clients really see my team and me as part of their own business plans. We're here to help them, advise them, protect them, partner with them. That's very rewarding.



Congratulations to our partner and friend **Cassandra Mott** on being featured in *The Secured Lender Magazine's* "Women in Secured Finance." Cassandra is a pillar of leadership and professional excellence within the financial and legal communities at large. Her outstanding generosity and kindness towards her colleagues, team, and community are experienced by everyone she encounters in her professional and personal lives.

**We are very proud of Cassandra for being recognized by *The Secured Lender Magazine*.**

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*Blank Rome is an Am Law 100 firm with 13 offices and more than 600 attorneys and principals who provide a full range of legal and advocacy services to clients operating in the United States and around the world.*

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